

Chapter 6 Men Who Have Sex with Men

Chapter 6 provides a profile of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Massachusetts among men who have sex with men based on several different data sources. HIV and AIDS case data are presented to provide a demographic description of HIV positive men who were exposed to the virus through male to male sex (MSM). Data for other sexually transmitted diseases are included to further highlight sexual risk-taking behavior among men who have sex with men. Behavioral data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) provide a demographic picture of MSMs (regardless of their HIV status) and information on their self-reported HIV prevention practices such as condom use. HIV Counseling and Testing data are presented to provide information on men who have sex with men who have been tested for HIV at state-funded testing facilities. Finally, data are presented from a chart review of patients with STDs at Fenway Community Health in Boston as an indicator of unprotected sexual practices in this service population.

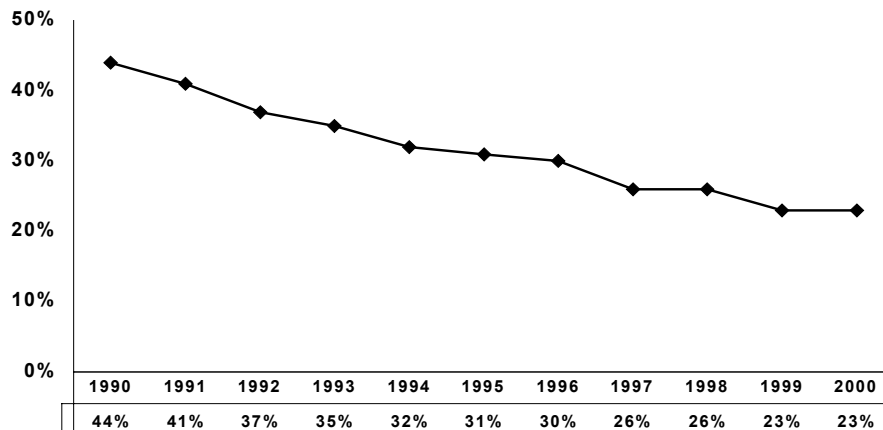
Across exposure modes, male to male sex accounts for the largest proportion of people living with HIV infection in Massachusetts (34%) and the second largest proportion of people living with AIDS (30%). Over three quarters of men living with HIV infection and AIDS combined who were exposed through male to male sex are White. Across age at diagnosis, Black and Hispanic men who have sex with men appear to be diagnosed with HIV infection at younger ages than White men: 14% of Black men who have sex with men and 19% of Hispanic men who have sex with men were diagnosed with HIV infection between the ages of 13 and 24 compared to only 8% of Whites.

I. Massachusetts HIV/AIDS Prevalence – HIV and AIDS Case Data

Men who have sex with men who are living with HIV/AIDS as compared to all people living with HIV/AIDS in the state:

- Male to male sex is the mode of exposure for 34% of people living with HIV infection without an AIDS diagnosis, 30% of people living with AIDS, and 32% of all people living with HIV infection/AIDS.
- While 43% of all men reported as living with HIV infection/AIDS in MA are men of color, less than a quarter of men living with HIV infection/AIDS who were exposed through male to male sex are men of color.
- From 1990 to 2000, the percentage of reported AIDS cases resulting from male to male sex relative to other exposure modes has declined steadily. (See *Figure 6.1*)

Figure 6.1 Percent of Reported AIDS Cases where Mode of Exposure is MSM¹ by Year of Diagnosis: MA, Data as of July 01, 2001



¹ Includes primary reported mode of exposure as male to male sex (MSM)
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program

Table 6.1 People Living with HIV Infection and AIDS where Mode of Exposure is MSM¹ by Race/Ethnicity: MA*Data as of July 1, 2001*

By Race / Ethnicity:	HIV		AIDS		<u>TOTAL</u> HIV/AIDS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
White (non-Hispanic)	1,427	77%	1,687	77%	3,114	77%
Black (non-Hispanic)	183	10%	271	12%	454	11%
Hispanic	213	11%	207	9%	420	10%
Other	41	2%	40	2%	81	2%
Total	1,864		2,205		4,069	

¹ Includes primary reported mode of exposure as male to male sex (MSM)
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program (percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding)

- While 43% of all men living with HIV infection/AIDS in MA are men of color, 23% of men living with HIV infection/AIDS who were exposed to HIV through male to male sex are men of color.
- For men exposed through male to male sex, the race/ethnicity distribution is very similar for men living with HIV infection without an AIDS diagnosis and men living with AIDS.

Table 6.2 People Living with HIV Infection and AIDS where Mode of Exposure is MSM/IDU¹ by Race/Ethnicity: MA*Data as of July 1, 2001*

By Race / Ethnicity:	HIV		AIDS		<u>TOTAL</u> HIV/AIDS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
White (non-Hispanic)	108	64%	153	63%	261	63%
Black (non-Hispanic)	33	19%	44	18%	77	19%
Hispanic	29	17%	43	18%	72	17%
Other	0	0%	2	1%	2	<1%
Total	170		242		412	

¹ Includes primary reported mode of exposure as male to male sex and injection drug use (MSM/IDU)
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program (percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding)

- Men of color represent 37% of all men living with HIV infection/AIDS who were exposed to HIV through male to male sex and injection drug use, as compared to

23% of men living with HIV infection/AIDS who were exposed to HIV through male to male sex alone.

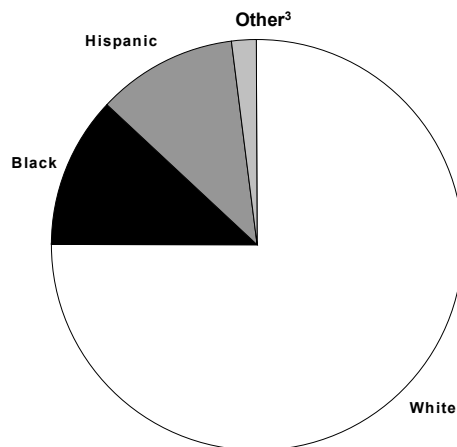
Table 6.3 People Living with HIV Infection and AIDS where Mode of Exposure is MSM or MSM/IDU¹ by Race/Ethnicity: MA
Data as of July 1, 2001

By Race / Ethnicity:	HIV		AIDS		TOTAL HIV/AIDS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
White (non-Hispanic)	1,535	75%	1,840	75%	3,375	75%
Black (non-Hispanic)	216	11%	315	13%	531	12%
Hispanic	242	12%	250	10%	492	11%
Other	41	2%	42	2%	83	2%
Total	2,034		2,447		4,481	

1 Includes men where the primary mode of exposure reported was male to male sex (MSM) and men where the primary mode of exposure reported was male to male sex and injection drug use
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program (percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding)

- For men who were exposed to HIV through MSM or MSM/IDU, the racial/ethnic distribution is similar for both men living with AIDS and men living with HIV infection only; White men account for 75% of both groups. (See figure 6.2)

Figure 6.2 People Living with HIV/AIDS by Race/Ethnicity where the Mode of Exposure is MSM¹ or MSM/IDU²: MA, Data as of July 01, 2001



1 Includes primary reported mode of exposure of male to male sex (MSM)

2 Includes primary reported mode of exposure of male to male sex and injection drug use (MSM/IDU)

3 Other includes Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaskan Native and undetermined

Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program

Table 6.4 People Living with HIV Infection by Age at HIV Diagnosis and People Living with AIDS by Age at AIDS Diagnosis Among MSM¹ and MSM/IDU²: MA

Data as of July 1, 2001

	MSM		MSM/IDU		<u>TOTAL</u> MSM + MSM/IDU	
By Age at HIV Diagnosis, in Years:	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 13	-- ⁴	-- ⁴	-- ⁴	-- ⁴	-- ⁴	-- ⁴
13 to 19	35	2%	3	-- ³	38	2%
20 to 24	149	8%	18	11%	167	8%
25 to 29	368	20%	31	18%	399	20%
30 to 34	490	26%	43	25%	533	26%
35 to 39	409	22%	45	26%	454	22%
40 to 44	221	12%	22	13%	243	12%
45 to 49	105	6%	5	3%	110	5%
50+	87	5%	3	-- ³	90	4%
Total	1,864		170		2,034	
By Age at AIDS Diagnosis, in Years:	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 13	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³
13 to 19	6	<1%	0	0%	6	<1%
20 to 24	57	3%	15	6%	72	3%
25 to 29	278	13%	33	14%	311	13%
30 to 34	556	25%	59	24%	615	25%
35 to 39	508	23%	69	29%	577	24%
40 to 44	407	18%	42	17%	449	18%
45 to 49	218	10%	16	7%	234	10%
50+	175	8%	8	3%	183	7%
Total	2,205		242		2,447	
1 Includes primary reported mode of exposure as male to male sex (MSM)						
2 Includes primary reported mode of exposure as male to male sex and injection drug use (MSM/IDU)						
3 Cases diagnosed under age 13 are categorized as pediatric mode of exposure and therefore are not included in the MSM mode of exposure.						
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program (percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding)						

- For HIV infection, the largest proportion of men who have sex with men were diagnosed in the 25-29, 30-34, and 35-39 age categories; for AIDS, the largest proportions were in the 30-34, 35-39 and 40-44 age categories.

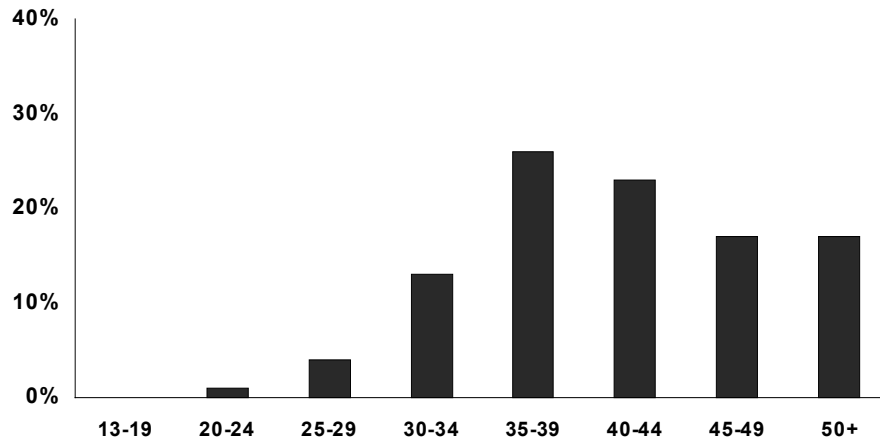
Table 6.5 People Living with HIV Infection/AIDS by Current Age among MSM¹ and MSM/IDU²: MA*Data as of July 1, 2001*

By Current Age, in Years:	MSM		MSM/IDU		<u>TOTAL</u> MSM + MSM/IDU	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 13	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³
13 to 19	6	<1%	0	0%	6	<1%
20 to 24	48	1%	3	1%	51	1%
25 to 29	162	4%	20	5%	182	4%
30 to 34	536	13%	43	10%	579	13%
35 to 39	1,039	26%	120	29%	1,159	26%
40 to 44	908	22%	103	25%	1,011	23%
45 to 49	675	17%	76	18%	751	17%
50+	695	17%	47	11%	742	17%
Total	4,069		412		4,481	

1 Includes primary reported mode of exposure as male to male sex (MSM)
2 Includes primary reported mode of exposure as male to male sex and injection drug use (MSM/IDU)
3 Cases diagnosed under age 13 are categorized as pediatric mode of exposure and therefore are not included in the MSM mode of exposure.
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program (percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding)

- Slightly more than one percent of men living with HIV infection/AIDS who were exposed to HIV through male to male sex are currently adolescents (13–24 years old). (See Table 6.5)
- More than 80 percent of all men living with HIV infection/AIDS who were exposed to HIV through male to male sex are 35 or older—17 percent are 50 or older.

**Figure 6.3 People Living with HIV/AIDS by Current Age
Where the Mode of Exposure is MSM¹ and MSM/IDU²:
MA, Data as of July 01, 2001**



¹ Includes primary reported mode of exposure of male to male sex (MSM)

² Includes primary reported mode of exposure of male to male sex and injection drug use (MSM/IDU)

Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program

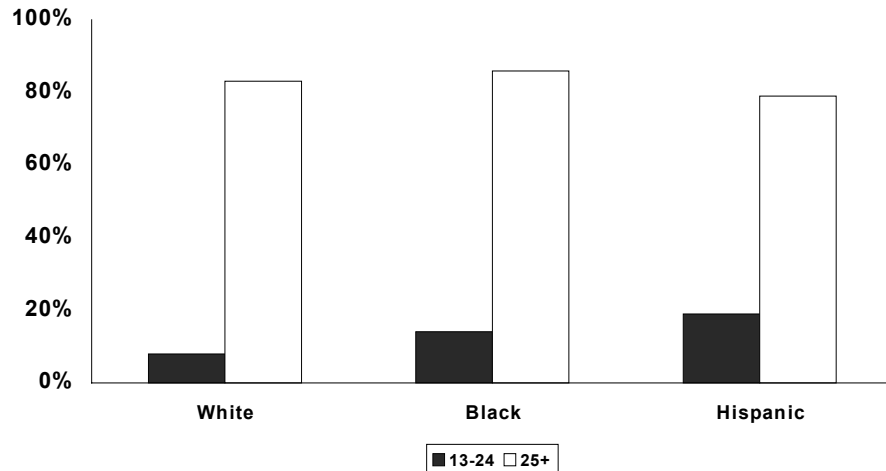
Table 6.6 People Living with HIV Infection by Age at HIV Diagnosis and People Living with AIDS by Age at AIDS Diagnosis, Race/Ethnicity among MSM¹: MA

Data as of July 1, 2001

	WHITE NH		BLACK NH		HISPANIC		OTHER	
By Age at HIV Diagnosis, in Years:	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 13	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³
13 to 19	13	1%	7	4%	14	7%	1	-- ³
20 to 24	99	7%	19	10%	25	12%	6	15%
25 to 29	264	19%	38	21%	59	28%	7	17%
30 to 34	379	27%	49	27%	50	23%	12	29%
35 to 39	323	23%	36	20%	44	21%	6	15%
40 to 44	185	13%	17	9%	14	7%	5	12%
45 to 49	90	6%	9	5%	4	-- ³	2	-- ³
50+	74	5%	8	4%	3	-- ³	2	-- ³
Total	1,427		183		213		41	
By Age at AIDS Diagnosis:	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 13	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³	-- ³
13 to 19	2	<1%	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%
20 to 24	33	2%	13	5%	11	5%	0	0%
25 to 29	188	11%	45	17%	33	16%	12	30%
30 to 34	398	24%	74	27%	75	36%	9	23%
35 to 39	411	24%	54	20%	36	17%	7	18%
40 to 44	337	20%	43	16%	20	10%	7	18%
45 to 49	177	10%	21	8%	16	8%	4	-- ²
50+	141	8%	19	7%	14	7%	1	-- ²
Total	1,687		271		207		40	
<p>1 Includes primary reported mode of exposure as male to male sex (MSM)</p> <p>2 Percentages calculated from a numerator of 5 or less and a denominator of less than 100 are not presented.</p> <p>3 Cases diagnosed under age 13 are categorized as pediatric mode of exposure and therefore are not included in the MSM mode of exposure.</p> <p>Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program (percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding)</p>								

- Though the greatest proportion of men who have sex with men are diagnosed with HIV infection between the ages of 25 and 40, more men are diagnosed with HIV infection as adolescents (13–24 years old) among men of color who have sex with men (14% Black, 19% Hispanic) than among White men who have sex with men (8%). (See Figure 6.3)

Figure 6.4 People Living with HIV where the Mode of Exposure is MSM¹, Race/Ethnicity by Age at Diagnosis of HIV Infection: MA, Data as of July 01, 2001



¹ Includes primary reported mode of exposure of male to male sex (MSM)
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program

II. Seroprevalence Data - Unlinked HIV Seroprevalence program

Table 6.7 HIV and Syphilis Seropositivity at Three Publicly Funded STD Clinics¹ Among Men who Have Sex with Men: MA, 1990 – 2000			
	TOTAL TESTS	% HIV POSITIVE	% SYPHILIS POSITIVE
1990	72	29%	18%
1991	97	21%	8%
1992	73	18%	3%
1993	95	25%	7%
1994	68	0%	0%
1995	52	23%	4%
1996	82	16%	2%
1997	97	16%	3%
1998	132	8%	5%
1999	152	10%	3%
2000	121	9%	1%
1 Tests performed at 3 selected publicly funded STD clinic sites. (People also test for HIV and Syphilis at non-publicly funded sites for whom data are not represented in this table) Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Bureau Counseling and Testing Program (percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding)			

- The percent of men who have sex with men testing positive for HIV and for Syphilis at three STD clinics has generally declined over time.

III. Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) – chart review data

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health contracted with Fenway Community Health (FCH), a community-based health center serving the health care needs of the gay and lesbian community in greater Boston, to analyze STD trends in the patient population from 1985-1997. After a relatively stable yearly incidence, rates of positive gonorrhea cultures increased yearly from 1997 through 1999. Most of the increased incidence was due to gonorrhea among men, primarily men who have sex with men, though an increase in cervical gonorrhea was also seen. While syphilis screening is routinely performed for clients at FCH, 1999 marked the first recognized symptomatic case of syphilis at FCH in over 7 years. Of the five total cases of syphilis identified at FCH in 1999, 3 of the individuals were HIV positive, including one of the two symptomatic cases. The researchers also found an increase in the geographic variability among men who have sex with men presenting with STDs. They demonstrated a spread of new cases from outside the FCH proximate catchment area, suggesting a more widespread STD epidemic among men who have sex with men in New England. In conclusion, these findings serve as an indicator of increased risk-taking behavior by some men who have sex with men and highlight the need for new strategies to strengthen and reinforce safe-sex messages in this population. (Adapted from “Increasing Rates of Syphilis and Gonorrhea Among Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) at a Boston Community Health Center, 1997-1999”, published by Fenway Community Health, Poster #100173).

IV.A. Behavioral Data - Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

Table 6.8 Demographic Profile Of Men Ages 18 – 64 Who Report Sex With Men In Past Year: MA, 2000					
Age, in Years: N=88 %			# of Sexual Partners: N %		
18-24	7	16%	1 Partner(s)	50	70%
25-34	22	23%	2 Partner(s)	7	7%
35-44	41	45%	3 Partner(s)	29	23%
45+	17	16%			
Race: N=88 %			Condom Use at Last Sexual Encounter: N %		
White	61	63%	Yes	35	33%
Black	3	4%	No	53	68%
Hispanic	20	30%			
Asian	1	1%			
Education: N=88 %			Reason for Condom Non-Use: N %		
Less than High School	11	21%	Partner Refused	1	2%
High School Graduate	14	19%	Partner not at Risk	25	60%
1-Years of College	20	23%	Same HIV status as Partner	8	12%
College Graduate	43	37%	No Anal Sex	12	12%
			Other	6	15%
Income: N=88 %			Health Service Region: N %		
\$<25,000	16	30%	Boston HSR	28	27%
\$25,000-34,999	7	5%	Central HSR	5	6%
\$35,000-49,999	14	23%	MetroWest HSR	14	21%
\$50,000-74,999	11	12%	Northeast HSR	11	11%
\$75,000+	28	30%	Southeast HSR	15	22%
			Western HSR	15	13%
Note: There were only 5 men who reported having sex with both men and women. We could not provide demographic information for this group Questions about substance abuse were not asked in 2000; substance abuse among this group could not be estimated. Data Source: Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2000					

- 88 male respondents to the BRFSS reported having sex with men in the past year.
- Among these men, the majority were 35-44 year olds (45%), White (63%), 37% were college graduates and 27% were from the Boston health service region.

- Thirty percent of the men who reported having sex with men identified their race/ethnicity as Hispanic.
- Among these men, 70% reported 1 sexual partner while 23% reported 3 or more.
- Regarding condom use, 68% reported not using a condom at last sex; the main reason given for non-use of condom was that their partner is not at risk (60%).

Table 6.9 Percent of Male Respondents Ages 18 – 64¹ Reporting Same Sex Partner² by Race/Ethnicity: MA, 2000

Race/Ethnicity:	Percent of Males Reporting Same Sex Partner
White (Non-Hispanic)	3%
Black (Non-Hispanic)	4%
Hispanic	16%
Asian	2%
Total:	5%
1 Sexually active in past year (n=1,504)	
2 During the past 12 months	
Data Source: Massachusetts Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2000	

- Among 1,504 sexually active respondents, 5% of men reported a same sex partner during the past twelve months.
- 16% of Hispanic men reported same sex partners compared to 4% of Black men, 3% of White men and 2% of Asian men.

IV.B. Behavioral Data – Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)**Table 6.10 Sexual Behavior as Reported Among Male Respondents, Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): MA**
Calendar Year 1999

	Opposite Sex		<u>Sex of Partner</u> Same-Sex		Both Sexes	
	% ¹	Total N ²	% ¹	Total N ²	% ¹	Total N ²
By Behavior:						
Ever had sexual intercourse ³	86%	1,037	93%	32	88%	36
Sexual intercourse before age 13	17%	1,042	15%	35	54%	38
4 or more lifetime sexual intercourse partners	28%	1,060	19%	35	63%	38
4 or more sexual intercourse partners in last 3 months	7%	1,060	6%	35	43%	39
Alcohol/drugs used at last intercourse ⁴	27%	552	26%	18	60%	23
Condom used at last intercourse ⁴	66%	542	61%	18	33%	26
Ever been diagnosed with any STD (1999 only)	4%	1,159	5%	42	44%	45
Ever injected illegal drugs	4%	1,185	6%	42	39%	46
¹ % = percent of total responding "yes" to specified question ² N = total number of respondents by sex of partner for each question. The number of respondents for each question varies because not all questions are asked of everyone taking the survey and even when the question is asked some survey participants do not provide an answer ³ Question asked of a sample of males who reported any sexual contact with opposite sex partner, same sex partner, or both. ⁴ Among youth reporting sexual intercourse in the past three months Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Education						

- Males were categorized as "sexually experienced" if they answered that they had had sexual "contact" with females, males, or both. Most, but not all males reporting sexual "contact" also reported sexual intercourse. Differences between groups in reporting sexual "intercourse" were not statistically significant.
- Adolescent males with both male and female sexual partners reported the highest percentages of having had sexual intercourse before age 13, of having four or more lifetime partners and partners within the past three months, of having used alcohol or drugs prior to most recent intercourse, of having ever been diagnosed with an STD, and of having ever injected illegal drugs. All differences between bisexually active males and males with only male or only female partners were statistically significant.
- Bisexually-active males were significantly less likely than males with only male or only female partners to have used a condom at the time of their most recent intercourse.

V. Service Utilization - Counseling and Testing Data

Table 6.11 Number and Percent of Positive HIV Tests¹ by Year of Test for Clients with Reported Risk of Male to Male Sex: MA, 1992-2000

By Year of Test:	Total Tests	Total Positive Results	Percent Positive
1992	4,340	293	7%
1993	4,294	227	5%
1994	4,397	216	5%
1995	4,552	215	5%
1996	4,176	173	4%
1997	3,847	138	4%
1998	3,706	125	3%
1999	3,712	117	3%
2000	3,770	105	3%
Total	36,794	1,609	

¹ Tests performed at publicly funded counseling and testing sites. (People also test for HIV at non-publicly funded sites for whom data are not represented in this table)

- The number of men who were tested for HIV at publicly funded Counseling and Testing sites and reported risk of male sex with male (MSM) increased by about five percent from 1992 to 1995 and then decreased by 17 percent through 2000.
- The percent of MSMs testing positive at Counseling and Testing sites has decreased since 1992 and is currently at three percent.

Table 6.12 Number and Percent of Positive HIV Tests¹ by Race/Ethnicity and Age of Client for Clients with a Reported Risk of Male to Male Sex: MA, 2000

HIV Tests by Race/Ethnicity of Client:	TOTAL TESTS	TOTAL POSITIVE RESULTS	PERCENT POSITIVE
White (not Hispanic)	1,915	44	2%
African-American (not Hispanic)	188	15	8% ²
Hispanic/Latino	341	14	4%
Asian	55	0	0%
American Indian/Aleutian/Eskimo	9	0	0%
Haitian	16	1	6% ²
Brazilian	58	1	2% ²
Portuguese	33	0	0%
Cape Verdean	11	0	0%
Other	0	0	0%
Unknown	84	3	4% ²
HIV Tests by Age of Client, in Years:	TOTAL TESTS	TOTAL POSITIVE RESULTS	PERCENT POSITIVE
Under 13	1	0	0%
13 to 19	196	6	3%
20 to 24	470	7	2%
25 to 29	413	11	3%
30 to 34	457	8	2%
35 to 39	448	23	5%
40 to 44	300	13	4%
45 to 49	162	2	1%
50+	202	6	3%
Unknown	61	2	3% ²
Total	2,710	78	6%
1 Tests performed at publicly funded HIV counseling and testing sites. (People also test for HIV at non-publicly funded sites for whom data are not represented in this table)			
2 Caution should be used in interpreting percentages with both a small numerator and denominator.			
Data Source: MDPH HIV/AIDS Bureau Counseling and Testing Program			

- In 2000, the majority of men who have sex with men (MSM) receiving HIV tests at publicly funded Counseling and Testing sites were White non-Hispanic (1,915) followed by Latinos (341) and African-Americans (188).
- The majority of MSMs who present at Counseling and Testing sites are between 20 and 40 years old.